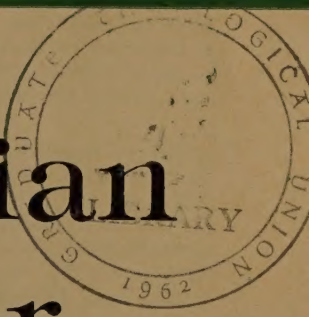


Christian Order



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READERS

With this November issue the very heavy season for renewals of subscriptions begins. It lasts until the end of April. I would be most grateful if you would help us during this period of heavy work in the *Christian Order* office by renewing on the first reminder and, if possible, by return of post. Might I also ask all those who have not yet renewed their subscriptions to be so kind as to do so now without delay. Thank you very much.

Paul Crane, S.J.

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You Change Your Address :

Please let us know two or three weeks ahead if possible and please send us both new and old addresses. Thank you.

Christian Order is a magazine devoted to Catholic Social Teaching and incisive comment on current affairs in Church and State; at home and abroad; in the political, social and industrial fields. It is published ten times a year.

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Christian Order

EDITED BY

Paul Crane SJ

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Essential Nerve-Point

THE EDITOR

IT has been said with considerable truth that the real difficulties of the Church in Poland will begin when that country is free of its Communist overlords, so that it stands, once again, independent in its own right. No slight whatsoever is intended here. My intention is merely to point the obvious, of which there are examples in plenty to be found in secular as well as religious and ecclesiastical life. For it is obvious that actual oppression or its constant threat binds a group or community of the citizens of a country together round their ideals as nothing else. The thing is tragic when you come to think of it, but appears to be so. Persecution, in this sense, is good for the Church and the more blatant and open it is the better. That is why, nowadays, the Communist Governments of Eastern Europe are much more subtle than they were in their attempts to destroy the Catholic Church. The old primitive methods have done nothing except strengthen the faith of the persecuted. The blood of martyrs is most certainly the seed of the Church; and well does the modern persecutor know it. In this context, the fact that the Polish Church, having survived the old type of persecution and flourished, is in process now of flourishing under the new, gives one legitimate reason for thinking that she may be the exception that proves the rule. I do not know. Time alone will tell. But

the rule remains, at least as a reasonable generalization, with plenty of experience to support it.

Where does all this get us? Admittedly, not very far; but at least to the point where we should ask ourselves whether it need always be so. In the case of the Church, I would dare to say it need not be. Surely it should hold together as the living, vibrant thing its Divine Founder meant it to be without the threat of an oppressor waiting in the wings as an essential to keep it on its toes. For it could be that the emphasis has been wrongly placed in the past; and that renewal is being wrongly emphasised at present. The question, surely, is one of nerve-points. I doubt whether the real ones are being worked on, for the tendency in renewal today is to consider the Church in terms of structure and practice, but with what appears as a minimum of regard for the supernatural life of its members and by reason of which it lives. This essential nerve-point remains untouched. The present bustle is at the periphery of structure and practice; but no improvement here will touch a man's heart, bring life to the Church as a whole in the only way possible; which means when its members really know what it means to share life with Christ and let flow over on others the love that flows in on themselves from this sharing. The rest can be left provided this is done or, at least, a real attempt made to do it. For this is the foundation of everything. Once it is laid, structure and practice will take care of themselves. But what we are doing now is to take care of these two as a first priority, dabbling at the surface, whilst we leave the heart untouched. The result is a husk, a nut without a kernel, a body without a soul; a community far too institutionally and socially bound, liable to disintegrate when things are normal, needing the persecutor to bring it to life, so that it may once more turn to God as a last resort—when all else is gone—and in the turning find new life. What I am saying here is that, instead of waiting until we are driven to turn to God *as a last resort*, we ought for a change to turn to Christ *as a first resort*, finding in Him, as we will, a whole new supernatural dimension that will enrich beyond measure the meaning of every moment of our lives.

In Padua, Italy, on August 25 of last year, Fr. Arrupe, the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, addressed the 12th Congress of Past Students of Jesuit schools and colleges in Europe. The Congress had taken as its theme the question "Is the Church still the bearer of men's hopes?", and Fr. Arrupe spoke in response to the challenge of the question. Acknowledgements to our Australian contemporary, "Social Survey".

Hope for the World

PEDRO ARRUPE, S.J.

"ALWAYS have your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you all have" (1 Pet. 3:15). This was how St. Peter advised the first Christians to meet the difficult times in which they lived. And he added that they should do it "with courtesy and respect". How would we reply today if asked to explain the hope we have within us? Are we ready to give an account of it to others?

If we look at the world around us, the signs of the times we read seem to be those of despair rather than hope. I have just returned from a trip to Asia, where I met with my Jesuit brothers working throughout the East. While there, I was able to visit one of the "lines" on a tea estate, a long, low shed of small, dark rooms, back-to-back, each housing an entire family in sub-human conditions of poverty, disease and hunger that I find hard to describe, yet harder still to forget. It was just one among hundreds of others, the typical home of an estimated one million immigrant Tamil workers deprived of all rights and services.

The Numbers of the Poor

What signs of hope are there when we know that similar conditions are repeated in so many other countries in the third world, that the number of the poor is increasing year by year, that their situation is becoming relatively worse in comparison with the well-off?

Today, man experiences, at the individual and at the social level, a deep emptiness, a spiritual void that neither technological progress nor materialistic ideologies can fill up. Disillusioned in his search for something that, transcending him, might give him meaning and freedom, man turns to himself only to discover his utter inability to attain, alone and unaided, his final destiny. Torn between, on the one hand, a rationalism and a technology that often manipulate and dehumanize him, and, on the other, hedonism which, instead of fulfilling him, only accentuates his inner solitude and dissatisfaction, man looks for support and understanding among his fellowmen. But this emerging hope soon vanishes, when he finds men deeply divided, envious and mistrustful of one another, and, when he discovers that the community — which was to be his main source of security and support — threatens to absorb him and deprive him of his personal freedom and identity.

Change

What of the Church itself? The very title of your conference indicates doubt and uncertainty: "Is the Church *still* the bearer of men's hopes?" Does that "*still*" have the same force as the Latin word *num*, which, as we used to be taught, introduces questions expecting the answer "no"? Some will surely think so and feel tempted to apply to the Church the words of the famous hymn "Change and decay in all around I see". A few do not expect and even condemn the changes that have taken place. Yet, at the same time, for others they are neither fast enough nor radical enough. And so we have deep divisions, bitter controversy.

Irrelevance

Much is said about the "post-Christian era", in which we are supposed to live, as if history had already bypassed the Church and its message. It cannot be denied that Church attendance has fallen, the number of vocations has dwindled and institutions, even old and famous ones, are sometimes struggling to survive or being obliged to close down. Earlier this year, a conference was held in Brussels to discuss the reasons for "the increasing irrelevance or

marginalization of the church and Catholic organizations at national and international levels". And, if we turn outside Europe, we find a number of countries in which the Church is being actively persecuted, not only by atheist regimes, but by governments claiming to be Christian and Catholic. Jesuits have been, or are still, imprisoned, expelled and even assassinated by those who persecute them precisely for doing that very thing our last General Congregation asked of them; to promote justice as an essential part of their service of faith. The grounds for hope seem slender indeed. But are we reading the signs of the times aright? Have we stopped to ponder what we are really hoping for? What, in other words, our true values are? Is it not possible we are men of little hope, because our hopes are false ones and because we wish to base them on ambiguous grounds?

False Hopes of the World

When the devil tempted Jesus in the desert, he challenged Him to do three things: 1) to change stones into bread; 2) to cast Himself from the top of the temple; and 3) to bow down and adore him. *These three temptations express succinctly the three great false hopes of mankind.* And they are as powerful and compelling as ever in our world of today. Nor is the Church free of them, nor anyone of us here present at the moment. It is essential, therefore, that we make an effort to understand them and to see what effect they have on our personal lives, our families and the society we live in.

Stones to Bread

The first temptation is in the lure of material wealth and comfort. It is now 10 years since Pope Paul VI, in his great encyclical, *Populorum Progressio*, declared that, "development cannot be limited to mere economic growth" (n. 14). And, in words that have grown in significance, he warns that "increased possession is not the ultimate goal of nations nor of individuals . . . The exclusive pursuit of possessions thus becomes an obstacle to individual fulfillment and to man's true greatness" (n. 19).

Yet, on all sides, we see people wanting to possess ever more and more. We are offered not stones, but a dazzling

variety of goods and services, and invited, with all the persuasive power of the mass media, to believe that we can convert them into happiness and fulfillment. It is not easy to resist when so many around us are taken in. So the tide of consumerism grows, sweeping all before it: values, cultures, even ideals are swamped. We are no exception, nor, in spite of its built-in defences, is even the Church itself exempt.

Cast Self Down

The second temptation of Jesus was to make a show of His power by miraculously saving Himself from self-induced injury. Today, what are termed the "power struggle" and "power politics" have become world-wide phenomena. And they are backed by the most massive production of arms known to history. *Even nations in which the majority of the people lack the bare essentials of life are spending high proportions of their national income on destructive weapons.* In this, they are aided and abetted by the wealthier nations who last year sold them some \$20-billion worth of arms, four times more than all other aid given.

Bow and Adore

The third of Jesus' temptations was to bow down and to adore. Modern man is similarly tempted to bow down before ideologies, systems of thought or social structures, and to attribute to them, in theory or practice, an absolute right or claim. In consequence, they end by enslaving him, even though he is sometimes not aware of this. Whether it be the supremacy of the profit motive, competition and private ownership — as in some forms of liberal capitalism — or whether the supremacy of the party, the class struggle and ideological materialism — as in some forms of Marxist socialism — both excesses deny that "liberty, responsibility and openness to the spiritual which guarantees the integral development of man" (*Octogesima Adveniens*, n. 31). Man becomes a "nameless number", as it were, on an assembly line; he is "depersonalized" by being stripped of his rights as a human person; he is no longer considered to be a man but a thing. The temptation to worship false idols is not

something peculiar to primitive peoples, whether in biblical or modern times. The false idols of our present day civilization are all the more insidious for being more sophisticated and better disguised.

By refusing to worship God and to serve Him, man also rejects the only truth that, transcending time and space, can truly satisfy and liberate him. And man bows and adores the limited and concrete truths, the value of which, here and now, he can easily ascertain. He lives simply in the present, deliberately forgetting the past, which he thinks has nothing to say to him, and not wishing to think much of the future, which he subconsciously dreads. He accepts only that which works, produces immediate results or provides temporary solutions, at least for today. Pragmatism, efficiency and immediatism also become idols that enslave man.

The three temptations I have just outlined are as present and active in the world as at any time of its history. Day after day they affect the way we look at things, the way we treat people, the way we do our jobs, the way we behave at home in our families. They affect the policies and actions of governments and of all the thousands of organizations and institutions that make up our society. And they also affect the Church, the teaching it proclaims and the witness it gives. Insofar as it is tainted by them, it betrays its mission and becomes the bearer of the false hopes of mankind. Hence, the ever-present need for conversion and reform so often stressed by Pope Paul (see, for example, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, n. 10).

Christ's Remedy

Jesus overcame His temptations in the desert through His prayers and penance. The Gospel account emphasizes that, after 40 days and nights of fasting, when the Tempter came, "He was very hungry" (*Mt.* 4:2). Later on, He Himself told His disciples that some forms of evil could only be overcome by prayer and fasting (*Mk.* 9:29). What measure of prayer or penance do we find in our own lives today, or in the life of the Church as a whole? These are not popular concepts. They do not figure as priorities for social reform or a new world order. To many, they will

sound outmoded, traditional. Yet they express a reality, a need that is as acute as it is contemporary.

"Not by bread alone does man live", Jesus replied to the Tempter (*Lk.* 4:4). Modern man is beginning to grasp the importance of these words in a new way. He is becoming increasingly aware that the attempt to live by bread alone is a sure way to destroy life. I cite two examples of this:

Real Hopes of the World

As we near the end of the Second Development Decade, planners and experts are finally coming to admit that development is not merely a question of increasing per-capita income. The bankruptcy of this policy is only too evident in many third-world countries where an exaggerated concentration on economic factors has led to the growth of poverty rather than its diminution. Hence the importance of the "basic needs" approach to development which puts people first and looks at their real and human needs. The process can only start with them, where they are and with themselves participating fully in everything.

Second, the material abundance of the wealthy countries, unparalleled in history, has shown itself to be a mixed blessing. The consumerism mentioned already has not necessarily improved the quality of life and, in some countries, among some groups, is being deliberately rejected. Material bread alone enslaves man: it does not liberate him. Man's freedom, as Vatican II puts it, "wITHERS when he indulges in too many of life's comforts" (*Gaudium et Spes*, n. 31). For these and other reasons, too, there is a new call to austerity from various quarters as a condition for both individual and corporate survival. Today, the need for austerity is brought home to us by the very excess and the uncontrolled development of our industrial society, which can lead mankind to the brink of global disaster, unless present trends are reversed or radically modified. This is an entirely new problem which the generations that preceded us had not to face.

Sacrifice

Drastic solutions calling for drastic sacrifices from all of us are required. All governments and political parties, be

they of the Right or of the Left, are well aware of this, but nobody seems to have the courage to adopt measures that are bound to become unpopular and of which the beneficial effects will only be felt in the long run. Hence, little or nothing is done, and, when somebody attempts to do something, the reaction cannot be more violent and more negative: "Why us? Why should *we* sacrifice ourselves for the sake of others? Let *others* begin!" An attitude in harmony with the Gospels should be austere and anti-consumerist in nature. Austerity is not opposed to progress, but is a measure that can enable the world to achieve progress in an organic way; it is a self-defence against self-destructive tendencies; it makes it possible to have universal progress at a more uniform pace. We have there the opportunity to bear witness that demonstrates our "credibility".

In a matter of such vital importance and urgency for the future of mankind, we Christians should take the lead. We should show to a world that considers itself "post-Christian" that Christian love and solidarity are still very much alive and operative in human society, even if we know that our example and witness will not always be recognized or appreciated. Thus, we will prove, in a very effective way, that Christianity, far from being "the opium of the people", is a living force that can tackle the present situation with courage and realism and point out to contemporary man that path toward a solution which man, left to his own a-transcendental resources, would never be able to discover, nor to find effectively.

Witness

It seems to me that we Christians in affluent countries have a special obligation to give witness in this respect. We are being called upon today to live much more simply as individuals, families and social groups; to halt or, at least slow down the spiral of luxurious living and social competition. Instead of feeling compelled to have many of the things that our friends have, we should do away with some of the luxuries that may have become necessities in our social set, but that the majority of mankind must do without. We must realize that to have enough is enough, and to have more than enough raises big questions. And we

measure "enough", not in terms of our own social set, nor in terms of any social set above us, but with our eyes on the truly poor and marginalized in our own society and in the third world.

Moreover, in the authentic Gospel order of reality, it is not a question of giving up only what is superfluous, what we do not need. If we accept the logic of the Gospel, we are bound to renounce also what we need because someone else has a greater need than ours. Don't the thousands dying of hunger in Bangladesh, India, Africa and Latin America need bread more than we need whisky or champagne or a super-abundant "first course" at table? How often are we far removed from this Gospel attitude! We have ears but do not hear, eyes but do not see (cf. *Is.* 6:9; *Mt.* 13:14; *Jn.* 12:40; *Rom.* 11:8)!

Don't Tempt the Lord

To rely on power and might, to seek always personal prestige, is basically to place one's hope in oneself. Though He alone could justifiably have done so, this second temptation was rejected outright by Christ with the words: "You shall not tempt the Lord your God" (*Mt.* 4:7). For man, however, the temptation remains a particularly seductive one. The unprecedented progress of modern science and technology, as well as many other branches of knowledge, seems an open invitation to deny contingency and proclaim a self-sufficient autonomy in which transcendent values have no place or meaning. The perfect society seems not only within reach, but attainable by human efforts alone.

Failure

In recent years, however, this confidence has diminished somewhat in light of the spectacular failure of so many plans and projects, and of the hard evidence that several major world problems are becoming more acute rather than less. Some are beginning to acknowledge not only "the ambiguous nature of progress", but also the fact that it "deepens rather than solves the mystery of the heart of man; nor does it provide the complete and definitive answer to the desire that springs from his innermost being" (*Octogesima Adveniens*, n. 40).

The true Christian hope that we expect from the Church today neither loses confidence in the face of the futility of things, nor places that confidence in itself. In the words of the liturgical prayer, it proclaims clearly: "Our help is in the name of the Lord". There is a well known saying of St. Ignatius, one version of which reads as follows: "So trust in God as if the issue depended entirely on Him and not at all on you; but put in a total effort as if it was to be all your doing and not God's at all". (I have chosen here the simpler of the two versions. There is another version of this saying, perhaps even more paradoxical: see Parmanada Divarkar, "Placed With Christ" [C.I.S., *Subsidia*, 19], pp. 82-83; also Hugo Rahner, "Ignatius' The Man and the Priest" [C.I.C., *Recherches*, 11], pp. 31-33.) St. Paul succinctly sums up the reason for such a procedure: "Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our sufficiency is from God" (2 Cor. 3:4-5).

Adore God Alone

This introduces us directly to the final temptation that Jesus rejected with the words: "Begone Satan, for it is written: You shall worship the Lord your God and Him alone shall you serve" (Mt. 4:10). Here we find the key to real Christian hope. Rooted in God alone, it underpins, guides and goes beyond all other solutions, ideological, political, social or economic. But, as Pope Paul emphasizes, it does so in a specific manner: "Going beyond every system, without, however, failing to commit himself concretely to serving his brothers, he [the Christian] will assert, in the very midst of his options, the specific character of the Christian contribution for a positive transformation of the society" (*Octogesima Adveniens*, n. 36).

The Pope then describes clearly what this specific character is: "For a Christian, progress necessarily comes up against the eschatological mystery of death. The death of Christ and His Resurrection and the outpouring of the Spirit of the Lord help man to place his freedom, in creativity and gratitude, within the context of the truth of all progress and the only hope which does not deceive" (*Octogesima Adveniens*, n. 41). This is our great message

to the world today: *Unless our hope is based on the cross, it is not a viable hope.* Deprived of this foundation, it will be a false hope that necessarily paves the way to hopelessness.

Time and again in his letters, St. Paul returns to this theme. "Far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (*Gal. 6:14*). "I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (*1 Cor. 2:2*). "We preach Him crucified" (*1 Cor. 2:2*). "We preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Gentiles, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (*1 Cor. 1:23-24*).

We cannot ignore this teaching, for it expresses the central paradox of our faith: namely, the apparent weakness, contradiction and defeat of the cross which, for the Christian, is his main strength and the source of his hope. Here the world breaks in on us with its objection: "This is a harsh saying, and who can hear it?" (*Jn. 6:60*). Many disciples of Jesus, as the pedants in the Athenian Areopagus said to St. Paul, jeeringly remark: "We will listen to you another time on this matter" (*Acts. 17:32*). Thus, St. Paul realized this better than most, and his life was a signal witness to the hold this truth had on him. Preacher of the Gospel, he even went so far as to rejoice that he preached "not with eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power" (*1 Cor. 1:17*).

The Task Ahead

A hope that comes from the cross of Christ cannot be destroyed by anything. However bleak the prospects, however great the problems or sufferings, Christians who possess this hope will be able to cry out with St. Paul: "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies" (*2 Cor. 4:8-10*). And they will be able to make their own St. Paul's great boast: "We are treated as imposters, and yet are true; as un-

known, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything" (2 Cor. 6:8-10). Let us test this out and we will see how contemporary St. Paul is. The real issue is deeds, not merely words.

The hope of which we are the bearers is based on the humble recognition of man's radical limitations and impotence; on our lack of trust in purely human and natural means to provide a global and lasting solution to today's problems. This does not mean, however, that we simply reject or condemn all human and natural values, culture and progress as useless; but rather that we are deeply aware of their limited and relative importance, of the need for integrating them into God's redemptive plan, so that illumined, vivified and elevated by the spirit, they may also become for man true signs and motives for Christian hope (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*, n. 7; *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 11; etc.).

Optimism

The Christian, faced with the world and its problems, far from being a pessimist, is essentially an optimist; far from shunning human responsibility and effort, he is the first to commit himself to the task of building a world more just and more human and never gives up in despair. In pursuing his temporal task, the Christian, for the love of God and of his fellow man, works, struggles and, if need be, dies, "in hope against all hope" (*Rom.* 4:18), knowing that while his work, struggle and life are necessary conditions for the world's transformation and man's liberation, that transformation and liberation will be ultimately and fully achieved only through God's grace: "By the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Cor. 15:10).

This is the hope we and the Church have to offer the world of today. But, first, we must possess it ourselves. This requires, on our part, a deep faith and an intimate union with Christ. St. Paul was able to hope as he did precisely because, as he himself so graphically put it, Christ was living within him: "I live, now not I, but Christ lives in me" (*Gal.* 2:20).

Truth

Men today look for the truth on which to base their hope, not in mere words or in abstract reasonings alone, but in the lives of their fellow men; people who embody and incarnate the very truths that they profess to believe. We need today the Christian witness, not only of isolated individuals, but also of whole groups and communities, which, by their lives may point the way mankind should follow in order to regain its hope and find salvation. I mean a witness like that of the early Christians of whom Philo wrote: "Their brotherhood surpassed all description" (*quod omnis probus liber sit*, n. 84), or of those who caused Flavius Josephus to exclaim: "They had a wonderful community spirit" (*The Jewish War*, n. 11). We shall become bearers of hope only when we not only possess the truth that saves, but, like Christ, our lives are such that show the way to that truth and inspire others to follow it (*Lumen Gentium*, n. 38; *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, n. 2; etc.).

This is the goal we, too, must strive towards. In a talk I gave last year in Frankfurt, I described it as "the decision to live the faith radically". And I said: "Europe's history is full of examples that show that great reforms and world-wide movements have been introduced and set in motion by people who unconditionally committed themselves to the Gospel message, such as Francis of Assisi, Teresa of Avila, Charles de Foucauld . . . I am deeply convinced of one thing: Without a profound personal conversion, we shall not be able to answer the challenge facing us today. If, however, we succeed in tearing down the barriers within ourselves, then we shall have a new experience of God breaking through, and we shall know what it means to be a Christian today. Why should we not succeed in this? Why should this Europe of the great Christian examples no longer be able to set a new symbol of its deepest energy and power; the decision for a radical living of the faith?" (Conference delivered in the Pauluskirche, Frankfurt, Nov. 21, 1976).

Hope

If we can measure up to this challenge, then the signs of despair I mentioned at the beginning of this talk will soon

turn into signs of hope. Let us go a step further with St. Paul and say: "More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us" (*Rom.* 5:3-5). Thus, then, it is precisely in insurmountable difficulties that our confident optimism is rooted. Still more, indeed, when it seems that we should give up hope because we see no solution ahead, it is then that we hear the words of St. Paul: "Hope that is seen is not hope". Authentic hope is "hope for what we do not see" (*Rom.* 8:24-25). We understand, then, the wonderful truth of Pope Paul's words: "The Christian's hope comes primarily from the fact that he knows that the Lord is working with us in the world, continuing in His body which is the Church,—and, through the Church, in the whole of mankind — the redemption that was accomplished on the Cross and which burst forth in victory on the morning of the resurrection" (*Octogesima Adveniens*, n. 48). This is the promise and it is ours for the taking. Have we the dedication and courage to accept it? Have we the generosity to pass it on to others? If we can truly say "yes", and if our reply is not merely a notional assent but begins to take real shape in our lives each day, then our Church will still be the bearer of men's hopes today, and today more than ever because "we hope for what we do not see" (*Rom.* 8:25).

OUTSTANDING

"The Right to Life" — a cassette by Fr. John Powells, S.J. and obtainable at the specially lowered price of £1 (post-free) from C. V. Productions, 48 Cambridge Road, Gillingham, Kent, England. Essential listening.

Bishop Stewart, who acted as host to Cardinal Mindzenty in his own Diocese of Sandhurst, Australia, recalls the Cardinal's visit, made five years ago, with love and reverence for so great a defender of the Faith.

A Sign of Contradiction

RT. REV. BERNARD D. STEWART

A NOTABLE and unforgettable time in the history of the Diocese of Sandhurst was the visit of His Eminence Joseph Cardinal Mindzenty, Primate of Hungary, from December 10th to 11th, 1974.

The day before, he had visited Melbourne, and in the evening was given a most enthusiastic reception in the Festival Hall, where more than 12,000 people assembled to meet and greet him. A goodly number of young people were present and were prominent in the applause that followed every mention of his name. All recognised a new kind of fighter in that Hall which had witnessed so many prize-fights—a fighter who had stood up against incredible odds when the hand of the persecutor fell upon him with unparalleled ferocity and he underwent punishment of body and mind from German, Russian and, to his intense sorrow, fellow Hungarian captors.

The Cardinal, his Secretary, Monsignor Tibor Mazeros and Father Vagas, S.J., a Hungarian Chaplain in Melbourne, were picked up at "Raheen", the residence of the Archbishop of Melbourne, His Grace, Sir Francis Little, at 8 a.m. The first stop on the journey, and at His Eminence's personal request, was at Pentridge, the Metropolitan jail, where several of his fellow-countrymen were imprisoned, two serving life sentences for murder.

We, who could understand his language, had no difficulty in recognising his compassion for these unfortunate delinquents. One of the lifers produced a battered old prayer book and with tears streaming down his cheeks, poured out his sorrow to the Cardinal in whom he recognised the healing Christ, comforting his lost sheep.

A journey of 120 miles brought us to Benalla, the first stop in the Diocese of Sandhurst. There had been a Migration Centre in this town, and some Hungarian migrants had settled there. They received him with great joy and he gave generously of his time to tell them of their homeland, its tradition of heroic faith and the sorrows and sufferings of their countrymen under the harsh regime of the godless. He was able to speak to them as a fellow-exile.

The Cardinal impressed us all by his reverent demeanor and, during the journey by car, by his recitation of the Divine Office which seemed to absorb him completely. The sign of the Cross at its beginning was a sermon in itself.

Our next stop was at Wangaratta, one of our principal towns, where he met the priests and religious who were profoundly impressed and delighted to meet this heroic defender of, and sufferer for, the Catholic Faith. It was not difficult for them to recognise the lines of sorrow, which marked his rugged countenance, nor the serenity that had come with his acceptance of the heavy Cross, God had laid upon him.

The largest gathering of Hungarian migrants was at Wodonga, Victoria's main Migrant Centre. He was given a Civic Reception by the Municipal Authorities. In the evening, the Cardinal, with his Secretary and Father Vagas, concelebrated Mass in the capacious Sacred Heart Church, which was crowded. The Mass and Homily were in the Hungarian language. His Eminence's noble appearance was enhanced by his pontifical vestments, and every eye was fastened on him. He was recognised as a Sign of Contradiction and all noticed the intense reverence with which he entered into the Sacred Mysteries, radiating Christ and Him crucified, through whom he brought all present to the Heavenly Father in the infinite worship, proper only to Calvary's Victim, made present, but all sharing.

His Eminence stood upright, preaching in his native language, intelligible only to his own Nationals, but in a strange manner, his message came through clearly to all present. Here was the "Alter Christus", true shepherd of his own flock with which we knew the kinship of faith and the privilege of association.

The hour was already late yet this man, strong in mind and seemingly tireless physically, was anxious to meet per

sonally and talk with the considerable number of Hungarians in the district, and so it was arranged. The meeting took place in the Civic Centre and it was soon made evident that not all were of the same mind as the Cardinal in regard to the proper attitude towards the Hungarian Government. Feeling ran very high with the main contention centering around the visits made to their homeland by migrants settled in other lands.

The Cardinal's argument was that the Communist Government was receiving a double benefit from the lifting of restrictions on travel. First from the boost to the economy, running into many millions as a tax of thirty dollars a day was put on every tourist; second, that the returning migrants would report favorably on their return to their adopted countries. He held vigorously that this was too high a price to pay for loss of freedom and restriction of religion, and that as long as this persisted the people remained shackled and enslaved.

His adversaries argued that ties of blood were the strongest ties and that the Cardinal's view-point was harsh and inhumane. One young non-Catholic Hungarian, who was very vociferous, apologised afterwards and acknowledged that his argument had substance.

It was a very strenuous bout, but His Eminence maintained his argument, stressing the claims of Christ against all other relationships. Monsignor Mazeros explained to us the main tenor of the dispute, which lasted for some hours. All this was twelve hours after a car journey of 200 miles.

The next day we set off for Bendigo, another journey of about the same distance. A stop was made at Shepparton for lunch (106 miles) where the Cardinal again met some of his Nationals and local priests and religious. There was a delightful meeting, also, with the children from the Junior School, who gathered around him. Again we had the phenomenon of rapt attention, even of the tiniest. Good seemed to flow from him and both old and young were enriched by his presence and the reception of his blessing.

Another 80 miles brought us to Bendigo, where our first port of call was the Monastery of the Poor Clares (Collettine). This Order had come to Bendigo some ten years before from Sri Lanka, a mixed community of English,

Scotch and Tamil Sisters. The Cardinal gave them a touching Homily, speaking in English, of which he had a halting knowledge.

After an evening meal, we went to the Sacred Heart Cathedral which, after a lapse of seventy years and more, had been completed interiorly. Mass was again concelebrated by His Eminence and the other Hungarian priests. The function was thought-providing and spell-binding even as we had witnessed at Wodonga.

In the brilliantly lit sanctuary, before a packed congregation, the Cardinal seemed like a Prophet, truly a man sent, as he spoke with a strong voice, again only his own comprehending, but sufficient for the rest his awe-inspiring presence and profound Faith. Christ's injunction: "Take up your Cross and follow Me" was, indeed, exemplified before us. Surely, here was a man of martyr's stature, tried in the crucible of suffering, and not found wanting.

Quite a few non-Catholics were present on that night and they shared our reaction. One minister put it in a pregnant sentence: "We did not understand a word, but word was unnecessary".

Next morning, bright and early, the Cardinal and his party, were driven to the diocese of Ballarat, 80 miles distant, where a similar day awaited them, different only in that they drove to Melbourne, seventy-five miles away, after the evening Mass as they were booked to fly to New Zealand the next day.

It would be rewarding to those who read these lines if a short account was given of the hardships and sufferings of Monsignor Mæzeros, the Cardinal's Secretary. He was imprisoned in Siberia for nearly eight years, being released in a political deal. Monsignor gave us an account of the conditions under which the prisoners lived and labored. They had to contend with sub-Arctic temperatures, meagre food rations, inadequate clothing, long hours cutting wood in the forests, and about six hours sleep often standing against the wall because of water on the earthen floor. Those who died in the forest were left to the wolves.

Worth noting and comparing, in these days of circus performances masquerading as the Mass, with clowning and stunting, the order of procedure and the Holy of Holies profaned in the process, was the Mass offered by

heroic Catholics and their priest in the Concentration Camp in Siberia. To be discovered meant death by the gun or probable death in the dungeon, a great open ice-bound pit where the sentence was indeterminate. Only the toughest survived the latter.

Each one of this heroic band, together with Monsignor Mazeros saved a little of the bread from his meagre ration and he, himself, a little wine which he kept in a battered old tin. The venue was the tip, remote from the Camp where the refuse created a foul stench, and only those whose duty took them there ever went near it—the time of offering was a dark hour of the night, the Altar the extended palms of one of the congregation. They were men who knew and believed that the sacred species could not be harmed by the surroundings, but their faith strengthened and luminous in the sight of God would present a sweet offering to Him, the Sacrifice of His Son. Hosts were kept on Monsignor Mazero's person and the dying, opportunity offering, fed with the Bread of Life unto Life Everlasting.

As a postscript to this account, and as we had heard before in Bendigo from Fr. Aidan McGrath and Fr. Bonigne, S.J., sufferers for Christ in China, Monsignor Mazeros told us of his captivity, when for three years he rebelled against his lot, but when acceptance came and a great grace followed, everything fell into place with new strength given and fear forgotten. As he, himself, put it, the captors became captives and the captives free, though in prison. The former lived uncomprehending and always in fear of their masters lest they be punished for being no longer sure of their role as guards. These heroic priests agreed that these years were the greatest years of their priestly life as they felt the strength of God within them.

It is to our content and the glory of the Cathedral that Joseph Cardinal Mindzenty celebrated Mass therein on the 11th of December, 1974, a date that is enshrined on the tablet that gives the short history of the dioces of Sandhurst. His name, so chronicled, will be held in blessing by generations to come and his heroic life will be an inspiration to them for he knew adversity and near martyrdom, met them, strong in faith and conquered them in Him, Who strengthened him, the Lord Jesus, Son of God eternally and Son of Mary in time.

The Author of this article, a parish priest in the area of Greater London, offers a view of the state of the Church in England and Wales, as he sees it today. This is done in the hope that readers will find in it useful pointers for discussion and the framing of suggestions and resolutions for the forthcoming National Pastoral Congress scheduled to take place in May, 1980.

The Catholic Church in England and Wales

REV. MICHAEL CLIFTON

INTRODUCTION

THE Hierarchy have announced that they will arrange a National Pastoral Council for May 1980 as suggested in the document *A Time for Building*. This seems a good opportunity to survey the state of the Catholic Church in England and Wales; its structures, its divisions, and its problems. There is undoubtedly a crisis in the Church at large and also in this country. There is an increasing break between those who may be called the "traditionalists" and the "progressives". In this article I hope to touch on some of the differences between the two sides.

HIERARCHY AND STRUCTURES

A full Hierarchy has existed in England and Wales since 1850 following the dissolution of the Old Hierarchy in 1559. At present, England and Wales are divided into 20 dioceses arranged in five provinces. There are 37 Archbishops and Bishops including auxiliaries attached to these dioceses. There are also Bishoprics for the Ukrainians and for the Forces.

In 1974, a document known as *Groundplan* was presented to the Bishops. This contained a plan to create several new dioceses by splitting the larger ones. So far this has been

hardly implemented, except for the creation of the Diocese of East Anglia. Some dioceses including Westminster are introducing a scheme, which divides the diocese up into areas each with an Area Bishop.

Working under the direction of the Bishops are approximately 5000 secular priests mainly in parishes, though about 500 have special ministries like teaching, administration or chaplaincies. There are also about 3000 priests from religious orders, about half of whom do parish work. There are about 60 different religious orders at work in the country and there are also about 12,000 nuns from 212 different religious congregations. It is impossible to say how many convents exist because so many of the larger houses have been broken down into small house groups which are in fact "mini-convents". There are also a further seven "secular institutes" working in England and Wales. Vocations to the Priesthood or religious life have dropped drastically in recent years and, in the next six years, the total number of priests may be reduced by around 10%. Many dioceses are already thinking hard about the redistribution of priests in the parishes.

The parish remains by and large the local unit for Catholics in England and Wales today. There are 2,650 parish churches and a further 800 Mass Centres. Various foreign communities have their own priests and the Ukrainians have their own Bishop, priests and a few parishes.

It is difficult to assess the total number of baptised Catholics in England and Wales as many are not known at all to their local clergy. *Groundplan*, in 1972, suggested a figure of just over 4,100,000 but a better estimate would be over 5,000,000. Mass attendance figures are published by the Catholic Education Council. In 1973, the figure was 1,825,933. From 1973 to 1976 Mass attendance declined by 6% to 1,722,210.

Some people allege that Mass attendance is a poor criterion for judging who is a good Catholic. However, it remains true that it is the only real guide we have, especially as the Church still insists on attendance at Sunday Mass as binding under grave sin, unless there is a good reason for absence. It seems likely, then, that only 33½% of baptised Catholics attend Mass regularly on a Sunday.

A private survey made in a North Kent parish recently showed that out of 460 young persons aged between 16 and 24, only 80 attended Mass in any way regularly. This is round about 20% and pinpoints another problem, the drastic falling away among the young. We could ask further questions. Why do not more people attend Mass? Does social class affect Mass attendance? There is some evidence that the better educated middle-class Catholic is more likely to be a Mass-goer than a less well-educated person of working-class origin. In some London suburbs the percentage of Mass-going Catholics is below 10%. This is particularly marked in council housing estates.

All this is only a rough guide. We could also examine the pressures of living in urban areas and the fact that some parts of England have a Catholic population which is 25% of the total population, while some remote parts have less than 5% of Catholics.

The fact that we are generally a mobile society means that many people go out for the day on Sundays and, though they may well attend Mass, it may not be at their own parish church. The variation in styles of liturgy between parishes means also that many people are, as it were, shopping around until they find a church that suits them. This tends of course to break up the sense of community. Generally the larger parishes come off best because they have a wider variety of Mass times and can often present what may be termed a "grand liturgy". Also, there are quite a few people who are content to be anonymous in a crowd, preferring this to the intimacy of a small congregation.

EDUCATION

The majority of the 3000 Catholic schools in England and Wales are voluntary aided. The authorities provide 50% of the building and external maintenance costs. The aim over many years has been to try and provide a place at a Catholic school for every baptised Catholic child. So, over the last 20 years, there has been a vast amount of school building. The introduction of comprehensive education has meant further building and further debt. There

are around 1,435,000 baptised Catholics receiving schooling in England and Wales today. There are about 990,000 actually attending Catholic schools. There are various reasons why this figure is not higher. Clearly, many lapsed Catholics do not bother to send their children to Catholic schools. The local non-Catholic school may be more convenient or of a higher standard. There may be no Catholic school in the area at all.

Projecting figures for years to come I estimate that, in five years time, there will be about 1,100,000 children (Catholics) of school age but only about 750,000 at Catholic schools, while, in ten years time, there will be about 885,000 Catholic children of school age but only 580,000 in Catholic schools. These figures are based partly on baptismal figures. I grant that the proportion of Catholic children attending Catholic schools may rise slightly, but, with lapsation so high at the moment, there will have to be cut-backs and school closures.

There is also a big problem with school debts. Every diocese has a large debt on schools. The total debt may be as much as £20,000,000. The interest at least has to be found each year. Most parishes pay an annual, ever increasing, levy. If Mass attendance continues to fall, there will be increasing pressure to pay on those who still attend.

The Hierarchy have pledged themselves to continue Catholic schooling so we might ask here if we are getting value for money. At one time the larger parishes had "all-age" schools where, if the educational standards were not so high, at least the loyalty of the children to the parish and so to the Church was assured and religious standards were high. Now, most children move on to comprehensive schools built on a neighbourhood basis and shared by several parishes. The old loyalty to the parish built up at primary school is broken. However, it seems likely that discipline at Catholic schools, including comprehensives, is far better than in some State comprehensive schools. Educational standards are at least as good if not better.

A more worrying problem is that of the quality of the religious education being given. In some secondary schools it is difficult to find anyone willing to take classes for Religious Education. Many Catholic teachers are lapsed.

Deviant ideas picked up at certain training establishments are sometimes put over in the course of religion classes. Some of these classes are reduced to mere discussion groups about world problems. Doctrine and morals take a back seat. In primary schools there is a tendency for the Sacrifice of the Mass to be "brought down" to the level of the children, rather than trying to educate the children to understand the true meaning of the Sacrifice. The Mass is sometimes taught as if it were no more than a commemorative meal. Some children may think there are two totally different types of Mass, the School Mass and the Sunday Mass.

On the credit side, there are good parent-teacher arrangements at many schools, while many secondary schools have chaplains, some full time. Many more children than before go on to higher education. However, it is worrying to note that many children from good Catholic homes lapse from their Faith in the upper years of secondary schools, while university life leads to further loss of Faith in spite of university chaplains (or even because of them).

It remains true that the best chance a Catholic child has of retaining its Faith is the good Catholic home and the example of its parents. The child from a home where neither parent is interested has little chance of retaining the Faith even when sent to Catholic schools.

LITURGY

It is fair to say that, more than anything else, Catholics have been upset by the changes in the Liturgy of the Holy Mass. For ten years now we have suffered a series of changes. The most significant change of course was the introduction of the vernacular throughout the Mass and the abandonment of Latin as a liturgical language in spite of the fact that each parish is generally supposed to have one Latin Mass a week. The virtual banning of the old "Tridentine" rite has upset many people.

The abolition of Latin is not due to the *Constitution on the Liturgy* from Vatican II. It is due entirely to decrees that came out later. Some people are worried that, in addition to the four official Eucharistic Prayers or Canons, there now exist a further five official Canons for Masse

with children or for "Unity". Then it is well known that some priests are even making up their own. Many people are upset about the translations. The older N.L.C. version gave a reasonable translation of the Latin collects, but this is being quietly dropped in favour of the I.C.E.L. versions. These versions often bear no relation to the original Latin and their theology is so watered down that the prayers would be acceptable to all Anglicans and most non-Conformists.

It is quite common to have hymns at Mass and some of these like "Let us break bread together on our knees" include very doubtful theology. Most of the folk-type hymns have pleasant tunes, but often that is all there is to be said in their favour. The Folk-Mass can be a reverential celebration, but it may well be more like a third rate pop concert.

The churches themselves have not escaped attention from the liturgical reformers. Many old High Altars have been taken out and replaced by a simple table so that Mass can be said facing the people. The Blessed Sacrament is often relegated to a side chapel. Altar rails have been ripped out and standing for Holy Communion introduced widely. Some churches have been systematically stripped of statues and paintings.

Recently the Hierarchy have allowed the laity to receive Holy Communion in the hand if they wish. This custom started as an abuse on the Continent and many priests are worried about possible abuses over here. Lay people are being authorised to help in the distribution of Holy Communion. For many people all this can only serve to lessen respect for the Blessed Sacrament and to blur the distinction between the ordained priest and the laity. Some priests encourage this by abandoning clerical dress and encouraging the laity to address them by their Christian names.

These same priests may well also in their preaching put over the Mass as nothing more than a sacred Commemorative Meal instead of the renewal or Re-Presentation of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross. It is popular to talk of "Celebration in Joy" whatever that may mean. In this type of celebration the dignity, awe, and respect shown at the Mass of old are almost totally discarded. Although the

total number of those who receive Holy Communion at Mass has increased, the number of those still receiving the Sacrament of Penance has dropped steeply. One is led to wonder if the sense of mortal sin is present at all, particularly when certain writers are putting over the view that it is virtually impossible to commit mortal sins because they involve a "total aversion" from God.

English versions of the Sacraments are now in use. These in general are reasonable and not open to so much objection as some of the translations used at Mass. However there must be serious reservations over the new Ordination Rite, which has eliminated much of the old symbolism and reduced almost to nothing the idea of ordaining a *sacrificing* priest.

ECUMENISM

As Catholics in general account for only 10% of the population, what of all the rest? They are split up into many different religions. The Church of England is still "established" and many children are still baptised into it. The number of church-goers is however relatively small. The non-Conformist Churches have also lost large numbers of church-going members. In general, there is a deep apathy towards organised religion. In face of this indifference many people from all Churches have been calling for the Churches to put aside their differences and unite to form a brave "new grouping" to face the modern world.

The Catholic Church as a living organisation has always had break-away movements. The reason is basically intellectual pride or knowing better than the Church. This pride is latent in all of us as a result of original sin, a doctrine heard little of today. In England we have of late tried to break down the barriers of suspicion and hostility which had built up over the years between the various Christian Bodies. It has been possible to arrange joint services of prayer, but there comes eventually the great barrier of doctrinal and moral differences.

The Catholic Church cannot compromise her position as the One True Church. We cannot give up revealed and defined truths like Papal Infallibility, the Assumption of Our Lady, etc. We will not abandon or compromise on Transubstantiation or the Sacrifice of the Mass. Recent

there has been a series of meetings between Catholic and Anglican theologians giving rise to the so-called *Agreed Statements* on the Eucharist, the Ministry and Authority. They purport to show some measure of agreement, but wide areas of difference were not really touched upon and the documents have not been ratified by Rome.

A rather disturbing feature in the Eucmenical movement is the assertion that, after all, we do not possess the fullness of God's truth, but all the Churches are still groping towards it. Some writers speak more of the sins of our past than of the undoubted holiness that constitutes a mark of the Church. In fact, with some writers, the four marks of the Church have been replaced with a new set—pluriformity instead of unity, sinfulness (of the past) instead of holiness, primitivity (an urge to return to the simplicity of the primitive Church) instead of apostolicity, and localisation (a group of local Churches) instead of Catholicity. It is disturbing to read of theologians who are pressing for a reversal of Leo XIII's definitive statement that Anglican Orders are not valid. No one denies that Anglican and Non-Conformist ministers are doing very good work, but nearly all of them would deny that they were sacrificing priests in our sense of the word anyway.

It is also disturbing to think that many of the liturgical changes have been made simply to bring our rites in line with those of the Anglicans.

There has been pressure recently to ordain women priests in the Anglican Communion and there are not lacking Catholic writers who say that women priests in the Catholic Church are a future possibility in spite of Pope Paul VI's strong words against. There are those, too, who are encouraging inter-communion of all Churches as a step on the road to unity. Such people are saying equivalently that it makes little difference what you believe about Communion or the nature of the Church. Most of the Ten Propositions produced by the Churches joint Unity Commission have been politely rejected by the Catholic Hierarchy, but there are many Catholics who consider that doctrinal differences do not matter at all and that we should unite at once, believing whatever seems true to us. This is a very disturbing move indeed.

RELIGIOUS DEVOTIONS AND SOCIETIES IN THE CHURCH TODAY

There is evidence of a sharp general decline in religious devotion. Very little penance is practised since the dropping of fasting and abstinence. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament is much less common and public recitation of the Rosary is not much to the fore. Some of the older Catholic societies like the Guild of the Blessed Sacrament and the Children of Mary have almost died out. Very little has been introduced to replace them. There has been a growth of "House Masses" and "Family Groups", but these of their nature tend to spring up and die away again.

The really big happening however has been the re-emergence of Pentecostalism, now revamped and known as the "Charismatic Movement". It seems fair to say that this has in fact helped some Catholics to deepen their faith, but it is fraught with danger. There is a possibility it may emerge as an alternative religion. The gift of "tongues" arouses the gravest suspicion among many of the faithful. The "ministry of healing" is seen as an alternative to the Sacrament of the Sick and is sometimes marked by sheer emotionalism. Worst of all is the feeling that Charismatic may fall into a state of spiritual self-deception; that they may feel they are better Catholics than non-Charismatic are; that is to say, they feel Charismatic Catholicism is compulsory for everyone.

PROGRESSIVES

The progressive movement sees the Church as in constant need of renewal to match the changes in 20th century society. Based on existentialist principles it seeks to accommodate doctrine, morals and liturgy to the so-called "needs of modern man". Much more emphasis is placed on social justice in the third world than concern about the new world. In fact, it is considered by a few extremists that the Kingdom of God is some glorious extension of the present universe; the Omega point ideal of Teilhard de Chardin.

The aim of extreme progressives is to discredit the traditionalist as a reactionary and to have him removed from office if possible. Then, falsely appealing to the words

Vatican II, they speak the new message of liberation and love which they say we have all lost sight of since the foundation of the Church. Doctrine no longer matters, the whole Church must be turned upside down. It must be based on the "People of God" electing their own ministers, not on a Hierarchy seeking to impose domination from above. There must be freedom of conscience, freedom of belief, and literal freedom from oppressive regimes, notably in South Africa and South America. The Gospel of Christ is the Gospel of Liberation, we are told.

More moderate progressives while rejecting this kind of liberation theology would still seek to adapt and recast doctrine to what they claim are the needs of today. This means re-thinking and re-formulating the message in a language that can be easily understood, and eliminating anything that stands in the way of such "progress". It is likely that there will be pressure soon for the introduction of the "Cup" at all Masses on Sunday, first by general encouragement and then by compulsion. Clerical celibacy is already under attack. Lay administrators of Holy Communion will be encouraged to think that they have received a kind of "mini-ordination". While moderates might think that this was only right and proper, the extremists see these steps as stages on the way to eliminating the ordained priesthood altogether and replacing priests with "Eucharistic Presidents" (the term exists already), who are lay people selected by the local "People of God" assembled in their "Basic Christian Communities". Much of this is hinted at in *A Time for Building*. Basic Communities already exist in some parts. The *Guardian* newspaper reported in May 1978 on one such Community in Rome containing ex-Priests and ex-nuns and some layfolk who hold a "celebration" on Sundays where the whole group recites the Eucharistic Prayer, which is generally composed earlier by one of their number.

The extreme progressive will then move on to demolish the Sacraments except for Baptism. A start could be made by asking the Bishops to obtain permission for General Absolution to be given before Mass, instead of the discipline of private confessions as now.

The removal of Catholic moral teachings has already begun. We find mortal sin going out by the back door. If your "fundamental option" is to please God, then individual acts against this option (the old grave sins) become minor indiscretions. Already theologians have contrived ways of getting round the papal ban on artificial contraceptives by speaking of "the lesser of two evils". . . or "merely a disorder not a sin" or appealing to "the primacy of conscience". Other writers introduce systems of "personalised or humanised ethics" to replace the "harsh" objective mortality we were brought up with. This is despite constant warnings from the Pope that systems of subjective ethics should not be taught. Many writers will support the false Anglican position on moral matters, that the only thing that matters in moral theology is to have the right intention.

The net result of all this is that confessions have fallen right off, and some priests are even known to doubt the existence of Hell and Purgatory. The teachings of Vatican II are widely misinterpreted by the progressives. Certain members of the laity are beginning to imagine that they the laity, are the supreme authority in the Church and should direct priests and bishops to do their will. They the laity, should elect and select their own leaders.

TOWARDS THE 1980 PASTORAL CONGRESS

I should just like to summarise here the main aims of the Progressives and Traditionalists. These views may or may not in fact appear at the Congress. I am not saying that all Progressives or all Traditionalists will agree with everything listed as aims here.

Progressives aims

The introduction of the Chalice at Mass, more lay administrators, more opportunities for general Confession, more chances to participate in the communion rites of other churches.

To start and encourage the growth of Basic Christian Communities as suggested by *A Time for Building* and the consequent setting up of large numbers of "small groups"

To make sure everyone is fully aware of the social import of the gospel in the fight against fascism and racism, help for the third world and social caring generally.

To foster ecumenism by reducing the importance of dogmatic differences.

To make Catholics more aware of "mission" and become responsible persons, using their conscience properly and freely.

To give a far larger share in the running of the Church to lay people (extremists only).

To end the distinction between priest and laity, to reformulate and restate Catholic Dogma. To end Confession in private.

To reduce the Sacraments to Two. To let everyone say Mass together.

To try and secure a reversal of Leo XIII's refusal to accept the validity of Anglican Orders.

To work towards a Common Ordination rite.

Traditionalist aims

Not to change the Church but to be concerned about its state while it still exists.

To ensure that orthodox doctrine is taught in Catholic schools and colleges of education.

To ensure a proper orthodox seminary training for all priests.

To end "ecumania" and the so-called dialogue and concentrate on proclaiming the true Gospel message.

To end compromise over moral matters and re-state Catholic teaching on Mortal Sin, Heaven, Hell, Purgatory.

To restate bluntly the doctrine of Original Sin and Redemption.

To remind people of the clear expressions of Papal teaching contained in *Humanae Vitae*, *Credo of the People of God*, *Memoriale Domini*, *Declaration on Sexual Ethics*.

To say a final NO to intercommunion and women priests.

To forbid any further experimentation with the Roman Liturgy and to allow the Tridentine Mass to co-exist with the new rite.

Women Priests and Women's Lib.

ARCHBISHOP ROBERT J. DWYER

POPE Paul VI, in a forthright statement, made it clear that the ordination of women is an impossibility, and discussion of it, therefore, completely futile. Nothing daunted, the planners are going merrily ahead for the symposium on the subject scheduled for this coming November (1975) on the campus of the University of Detroit, to which a gaggle of feminists, nuns, theologizers, and fellow-travellers will mull the matter over and doubtless come up with a counter-statement saying in effect that Pope Paul VI doesn't know the time of day.

Anglican Reflections

It is interesting, in this connection, to study some reflections on the problem from other than Roman Catholic sources. The Anglicans, who have been exposed to even heavier pressures to ordain women than ourselves (and in several regrettable instances have yielded, though not at first with official approval), have some worth-while things to say on the subject. A report submitted to the Church Assembly in 1966 noted, among other things, that "all theistic religions (that is to say, religions in which the God or Gods transcend the created order and stand behind nature and history, as well as acting in them, rather than being merged in a monistic or pantheistic unity) have male priesthoods.

"Female priesthoods belong to the nature religions in which human nature is merely part of society, society part of nature, and nature itself Divine. The Christian Church, rooted in the biblical view of God and His relation to the world, has without question adopted a male priesthood. It is therefore pertinent to ask whether the feature of a male priesthood can be modified by the addition of a female priesthood without altering the essential character of the Christian ministry, and without affecting the human psyché at those deep levels at which it responds to religious symbolism".

It might be added, as a reflection upon the foregoing that the current agitation in the Church to open the priesthood to women may be influenced in large measure by the active infiltration of monism and pantheism in the thinking of many of our contemporaries, theologians among them, who have been bedazzled and mesmerized by the evolutionism of Teilhard de Chardin and the Modernists. A case might well be made out to show that Teilhard's explicit pantheism (the Cosmic Christ) has played a major role in promoting the idea that sexual equality means the denial of sexual difference. But this tempting avenue of investigation we leave (at least for the nonce) to more leisured minds.

Women's Lib

Dr. Eric L. Mascall, the distinguished Anglican theologian, one of the clearest thinkers in our befuddled world, makes a telling point that if women demand to be, not only the equals of men, but competent to fulfil all of man's functions, this implies the superiority of a male status, a horrible and detestable thought! "If women want to be as like men as possible, that can only mean that manhood is essentially superior to womanhood. This is not a view that any Christian should accept; its basic absurdity is seen in the recent demand by a member of the Woman's Liberation Movement that women should refuse to bear children any more and that scientists should immediately perfect the technique of growing babies in test-tubes".

Or one thinks, with acute distaste, of the three liberated maidens dancing in the buff in Central Park to celebrate their renunciation of femininity.

The refusal to recognize the differences of the sexes while asserting, indeed proclaiming, their equality, is of a piece with much of the woolley thinking that passes for philosophy today. Yet the most obvious thing about men and women is that, while sharing the same humanity, absolutely equal in God's sight, they share and possess it in different ways, adapted to different functions.

If women insist upon total non-differentiation, then surely men have a just complaint against the divine ordering of things, inasmuch as they are radically incapable of bearing

children. If it happens that in the Christian economy the priesthood is reserved for the male of the species (and there can be no least doubt that Our Lord deliberately ordered and instituted it so) there is no injustice done to woman, no right denied her.

For to speak of the priesthood as a *right* inhering in human nature is to misunderstand totally its very nature. It is a function instituted by God Himself to which men only are called, not by right, but by God's choice. The Church could no more change or disturb this divine ordering of things than she could the dogma of the Trinity or repeal the Real Presence. Not even sheer necessity, the dearth of vocations, could justify her in modifying it.

Nor is there validity in the contention, frequently advanced by those who would interpret the development of dogma in terms of a radical evolutionism, that the opening of the priesthood to women is an inevitable forward step in the slow rise of humanity from its primitive inhibitions and taboos to that final (or is it so final?) Omega Point where spirit takes over from matter, and sex, along with sin, institutional religion, mumps and measles, are cast into discard. Whatever this is, and it answers to a wide variety of names, it is not and cannot be squared with Christianity.

A Paper by Dr. Mascall

In his cogently argued paper, "Women Priests" (1972), Dr. Mascall deals rather particularly with the argument that since there is no clear, hard-and-fast dividing line between male and female, some men have pronounced female characteristics and some women being mannish, the difference between them is merely one of degree. "The truth seems to be that there are many characteristics that are common to both sexes simply because they are both human, and many other characteristics that are proper only to one; but if we start by saying that female characteristics are to be found in men and male characteristics in women, we shall probably end up in a state of verbal confusion in which we shall find it difficult to maintain the distinction between male and female characteristics at all". And in our view it is precisely this confusion which is addling the minds of the advocates of a female priesthood.

Discussion Paper No. 4, in preparation for the forthcoming National Pastoral Congress was entitled *You and Your Church*. In it the General Secretary to the Congress, Father Tom Shepherd, extended a general invitation to the Faithful. "The Bishops want to know what you really think about your Church", he wrote, "Say what you really think and plan your local action : that is what matters". The letter that follows is in answer to that request.

CURRENT COMMENT

Letter to the General Secretary National Pastoral Congress

THE EDITOR

Dear Father Shepherd,

YESTERDAY morning Discussion Paper Number Four, *You and Your Church*, preparatory discussion material for the forthcoming Congress, came to me through the post. In it you tell us "The Bishops want to know what you think about your Church. Say what you think and plan your local action : this is what matters".

Hostage to Fortune

This letter of mine is written in acceptance of your kind invitation. Whether or not it will be followed by another I cannot really say at this stage. That will depend on how far I get with this one. Meanwhile, I am one of the many invited to say what I think about the Church in England and Wales. I am grateful to the Bishops for issuing this invitation through yourself. At the same time, I should like to remind them that, in so doing, they have given a considerable hostage to fortune. It is one thing for them to invite the likes of me to tell them what we think about the Church. It is quite another for them to listen to what

we tell them. The presumption here is that they will not merely do so, but that, further, when the advice received is good, they will proceed to do something about it. This is a considerable presumption, if I may say so. The experience of past years has shown only too clearly, I am afraid, that, where representation has been made to the local Bishop, he has either affected to listen and not done so; or done so and then done nothing further. I wonder if you realise, my dear Father, how disgusted a not inconsiderable number of Catholics in this country are as a result of this kind of episcopal vacillation during past years. Bitter experience has brought them to the point where the Bishops of England and Wales are hardly credible in their eyes. This is a hard thing to say, but it happens to be the truth. Now these same Bishops are asking us to tell them what we think about the Church. You see what I mean about a considerable hostage to fortune being contained within this request? Unless the Bishops give clear evidence that they *are* listening and, when the advice given is good, prepared for a follow-up in action; unless this is seen very clearly to be so, then they will lose what credibility remains to them and, I have to say, they will deserve to do so. For, if they fail in this respect, their request to know what we think about the Church will be seen with justice to be no more than what a good many of the Faithful fear it is—an episcopal ploy to keep them quiet; a show of affected interest to gain time and nothing more. Believe me, my dear Father, if this is seen to be the case, what could well prove a mortal blow may have been struck at the Catholic Church in England and Wales. Please make no mistake about this. Please understand also that no amount of literature, no number—if I may say so—of what appear to many as affectedly jolly little leaflets of the type being turned out by way of preparation for the Congress will ever compensate for another episcopal let-down along the lines indicated above. Let us be quite sure about this at the very start. There is *no* substitute for episcopal inadequacy at this time of crisis in the Church: if this persists, nothing—I repeat, nothing—can compensate for it. I would ask you and your congress colleagues, therefore, to do everything to ensure that the Bishops *do* listen to what we

have to tell them concerning the Church in this country and that, where it is warranted, they *do* act in accordance with what they hear from the Faithful in answer to their request.

The Need for Authority

This preliminary consideration brings me to the first thing I would like to say about the Church in answer to your request; that the Bishops should know not merely hear what we think about the Church in this country, but what we really think. I will take you at your word, my dear Father. I see no point in pussy-footing around. Neither, I hope, do their Lordships. Neither, I presume, do you. The first thing I really think—and I have been asked to say what I *really* think, not what I think the Bishops would like me to think—is that in the Church in England and Wales today we have a weak and vacillating Episcopate, whose members appear incapable of exercising their authority at those points at which it should be exercised most certainly today. I have in mind three areas in particular where abuse is widespread and which have been crying out for years for the appropriate exercise of episcopal authority; which is not to be confused with an authoritarian episcopate, something that nobody wants. It could well be, of course, that in their laudable desire to rid their office of the authoritarianism of the past, the Bishops have succeeded in ridding themselves of their authority as well; the baby has been emptied out with the bath water. Or again, they may have misinterpreted the late Pope Paul's emphasis on authority as service in somewhat confused terms, seeing it somewhat hazily as an injunction to accommodate their ways to that of the crowd, rather than *to serve the crowd with the truth*, firmly yet compassionately, on each and every occasion. It is this latter, surely, that Pope Paul intended; not the imposition of themselves on the Faithful with a heavy hand, as in the old somewhat authoritarian days, but the imposition of the truth very firmly, yet with understanding, as and when occasion arises. This, at present, is what we are not getting, yet it is precisely for this that the Faithful are hungering. Instead, we have from their Lordships an ease and familiarity—in some cases combined with a con-

trived heartiness, which can be somewhat embarrassing—that were not much in evidence before, coupled with a timidity in the presentation and upholding of true doctrine and a weakness in the toleration of abuse that the Faithful find distressing to the point, at times, of acute frustration. The combination is in no way pleasing. It has stripped the Bishops and, through them, the Church of a great deal of their former credibility.

It would be wrong to take what has been written so far, Father, as an attack on the Bishops. It is not. It is written in reply to your request, contained in your leaflet, that we should say what we really think about the Church. This is what I am trying to do and I am forced to start with the Bishops because they are at the head of the Church in this and every country. They are the successors of the Apostles and, as such, have received from God their authority to rule it under the Pope. Failure on their part and from whatever cause to exercise their authority—to serve their people with God's truth—will clearly have disastrous results in an hierarchical society like that of the Church. Unfortunately, this is precisely what appears to have happened. I wrote earlier of three areas where episcopal vacillation had brought results that were strongly corrosive of the Faith, to put it mildly. The areas are those of doctrine, liturgy and morals. I shall take these in turn and, in each, I shall indicate the nerve-points, vital to the life of the Church in England and Wales, where the near-failure of episcopal authority has brought near-disaster in its train.

The Seminary: A Nerve Point

In the area of doctrine, the nerve-point is clearly the seminary, for it is here that the proponents of the Church's teaching—the Bishops and priests of the future—receive their formation not only in true doctrine, but in holiness, by which I mean loving closeness to Christ and His Church and without which learning, really, is of relatively little use. I think it true to say that whatever the old seminary lacked (and the same would apply to the house of studies of a religious order or congregation), the priests who came out from it did so with a knowledge and love of the Church's teaching, with a loyalty to it that was very strong

and with the foundations of what was then called the spiritual life set deep within them. Few, I think, would deny this. Few, I think, would deny that in the seminaries of today there is more than a whiff of neo-Modernism in doctrinal teaching and a tendency to permissiveness in moral exposition that leaves one ill at ease. It is important not to generalise or overstate the case in either of these regards. It is equally important not to understate it. There is need of vigilance here. I am suggesting that it is not yet exercised as it should be by episcopal authority. Overall, I would suggest further, there seems to be a lack of direction in seminary studies, which would appear to be too taken up with innovation for its own sake and experimentation at the expense of that clear and accurate presentation of doctrinal and moral teaching as true in itself and as relevant today, for which I believe most firmly there can be no substitute. In the contemporary seminary, true doctrine must be presented first and foremost as the criterion against which today's confused jumble of belief should be set: today's mistake, surely, is to substitute the latter for the former in far too many instances. I am not calling for rigidity here. What is needed is a measuring-rod against which the prevailing variety of philosophical and theological opinion can be set. This, I fear, is what the priests of the future are not getting—to the detriment of the Faithful at large.

And where the foundations of holiness are concerned—in terms of the closeness of the priest to Christ and His Church—it should be equally clear that the greatest care is required here and that, on the whole, its exercise appears to be at a certain discount today. Yet the need for care appears the greater when one realises that, today more than ever, the priest has got to be a man more closely concerned with people than his predecessors were; in this world, perhaps, to a greater degree than they were, though in no way of it; at the same time, in no way standing on his position, whilst giving himself to others for Christ's sake and without thought for himself. The life of tomorrow's priest, I believe, will have to be far less compartmentalized than that of his predecessors was and his level of living, wherever possible, of a very simple sort; a very hard life, indeed,

which only a deep love of Christ can carry him through. The seeds of that love must be firmly planted in the seminary and religious house of studies, and this will only be the case if those who teach him there practise what they preach. What one notices today is that genuine devotion—as distinct from formalized piety—appears to be at a discount in seminaries and religious houses of study. In its place, in some cases, there would appear to be a certain secularism which I, for one, find disconcerting. I believe that on-the-spot observation would confirm what has just been written above. Further evidence that something is sadly lacking in the formation of future priests is provided by the number of defections from the priesthood and/or religious life that have occurred since the Council and the greatly reduced seminary intake of recent years. Overall, there is or appears to be a confused uncertainty that besets priestly and religious formation and that is passed inevitably by many of today's priests and religious to the laity they are meant to teach. The ensuing, depressing effect on the Faith of many in the Church is obvious enough today. Under the circumstances, it is imperative that a long, hard look should be taken at seminary and religious formation and that Bishops and Religious Superiors should exercise their authority in this regard with intelligence, understanding and firmness. The basic responsibility in this matter is theirs and they should assume it without delay.

Episcopal Authority and Teaching Institutes

Still in the area of doctrine, it is essential to remind ourselves that, in the case of the Church, which is by nature an hierarchical society, if Bishops fail in their duty of insisting that true doctrine be taught in the seminaries and true devotion encouraged, then the various institutes set up by them to assist still further the Church's teaching mission will fail in their purpose. The reason is that those who teach in these institutes will themselves have been taught by priests and religious infected, too often, with the doctrinal neo-Modernism and moral permissiveness that has infected and is infecting their own teachers in seminaries and houses of religious formation. The fish, it is said, rots from the head down. This is the case here. There

is the additional factor that clerics and lay groups of progressive bent appear to have worked together since the Council to work themselves into posts of influence within the Church in England and Wales. In this they have been successful, trading as they have done on episcopal ignorance and timidity and assisted, often enough, by friends in high places of the same way of thinking as themselves. The result on the whole has been and is little short of disastrous. Most noticeable is the flight from true devotion in so many Catholic institutes—to the point, indeed, where one wonders whether those who teach in them have the Faith or those who are at the receiving end of their teaching will ever succeed in keeping it.

Faith Corroded

I am thinking here, of course, of catechetical and pastoral instituters, teachers training colleges and schools, so many of which seem so weak in the presentation of true doctrine and morals that one wonders, with good reason, whether they are teaching the old Faith or a new, neo-modernistic version invented by themselves; a "Faith" that appears to leave little room in it for sin, Hell or Heaven, that remains unacquainted with the total significance of Grace in the life of the Christian and that appears to lead its victims to care for others, not on account of Christ, but as a substitute for Him. When you come to think of it, my dear Father, it really is shocking that these institutes, so many of which have shown themselves, on balance, destructive of Faith and morals, should have been allowed to carry on in this fashion—and are still allowed so to carry on—without so much as a bleat from the Bishops. In this context, one remembers Corpus Christi College. Contrary to popular belief, it was not the late Cardinal Heenan, but a group of laymen, all members of Pro Fide, who took the initiative against it by writing the letter that set off the process which ended in the demise of this iniquitous establishment. Had that letter not been written by those laymen, I think it quite likely that Corpus Christi would still be in business, spreading its poison today. One need not labour the point. As with the seminaries, so with institutes, training colleges and schools—episcopal weakness has delivered them too often

into neo-modernist, permissive and progressive hands. The result has been the corrosion of the Faith of large numbers of their students. I remember a priest-chaplain to a large and well known Catholic secondary school, who taught Religion to its fifth and sixth forms. He told me he felt able, with God's help, to save the Faith of those boys, who had not lost it by the time they entered the fifth form. The implications here are appalling. How many Catholic schools are there, I wonder, like that in this country. I think, Father, you might be surprised. One of the gravest charges that can and should be made against the Bishops of England and Wales is that they have let this state of affairs go on for years and done just nothing about it. I am bound to regard this as a serious dereliction of duty on their part. It is not that they have not known. They have had plenty of representation made to them by parents, not merely concerned, but deeply distressed by this state of affairs. On balance, the Bishops have done next to nothing to remedy it; the proof being the simple and obvious one, that it still goes on. It will continue to do so until the Bishops do their duty in this matter. They should be reminded of it at the coming National Pastoral Congress in the strongest possible terms. They have said, through you, that they want to know what we really think about the Church in England and Wales. It is not for them to complain if we tell them. This, after all, is what they asked for.

Liturgical Abuse

I am going to turn now from the area of doctrine to that of liturgy. This is logical enough, for liturgy is an expression of doctrine: *lex orandi est lex credendi*. The trouble, since the Council, is that it has tended to be the reverse; instead of expressing true belief and promoting it, current liturgical practice has tended to obscure and diminish it. I think myself that the basic reason for this tragic reversal is found largely in the fact that the inauguration and handling of liturgical change in recent years has been in the hands of a somewhat esoteric clique of (often self-appointed) experts over whom the Bishops have rarely sought to exercise effective control; in all probability because they

were frightened of them. Moreover, it has to be said that, under the late Pope Paul VI, there was or appeared to be a similar unwillingness to control the innovators at higher ecclesiastical level. What happened, in consequence of this unwillingness, was that one would expect to happen in any field wherever esoteric cliques of this sort gain power and influence. Things get out of control. The reason is that members of these groups are usually taken up almost wholly with themselves and with the ideas that circulate amongst themselves without ever reaching the public whom they neither know nor understand nor care much about and whom a good many of their number despise. In the case of the liturgical reforming group within the Catholic Church in England and Wales, this has meant a concentration on innovation largely for its own sake and on the need to see it through at all costs; therefore without regard for the effect produced on the Faithful who have been subjected to the traumatic shock, not only of the innovation itself, but of its overnight imposition on themselves. Elsewhere, I have described the process employed by the innovators as Democratic Centralism, paralleled only by that which exists in the Soviet Union today. The result has been confusion in the minds of the Faithful bordering in a good many cases on near-despair. People have seen cherished liturgical practices expressive of true belief destroyed overnight and a new liturgy hardly expressive, as they see it, of the Faith in which they were brought up thrust down on them without a word of explanation. The same applies, of course, in the field of devotional practice. The lack of compassion that has attended liturgical and devotional innovation these past years has been appalling; cruel beyond words. Episcopal indifference in face of it has been paralleled by a brand of cowardice that has yielded to the thrust of self-contained liturgical innovators even when it was known, as it must have been known to the Bishops, what untold suffering would be brought to the Faithful in its train. The wounds have gone deep, particularly and understandably where the Tridentine Mass is concerned, and the wounds remain along with the general liturgical confusion which, in some cases, has reached a point not far removed from anarchy. What is needed now is not further

innovation, but the firm exercise of authority by the Bishops in this matter, for the liturgists and their commissions are not the authority in this field, any more than the theologians are in that of doctrine. This belongs to the Bishops in either case and it is for them to exercise it firmly, but with great compassion and understanding for those who have been afflicted during past years to the point where their Faith has been badly shaken and, in too many tragic cases, destroyed.

Episcopal Authority and Morals

When one turns to the third area—of morals—the question that comes to mind at once is that of contraception, for it is here, in particular, that the walls have been badly breached, with two many individuals shopping around in the hope, not infrequently fulfilled, of finding a priest who will tell them that, under their own particular circumstances, it is “alright” or that they must go by their conscience, even though the priest should know, as he does in many cases, that what the inquirer will invoke is not conscience but private judgment, which is in no way the same thing. Here, once again, episcopal authority has been notable by the absence of its exercises; the problem has been allowed to slide under the carpet and a blind eye turned to a growing abuse. The same may be said to a lesser extent of abortion, action against which has been assumed for the most part and most courageously by the laity. And one wonders, when the time comes for euthanasia to be submitted for parliamentary consideration, whether outright and strong episcopal protest will be forthcoming, or will timidity prevail on the episcopal bench as it did in the case of abortion. One could go on, my dear Father, but I see little point in so doing. In general, it has to be said that the duty of the Bishops is not only to stand firm and unafraid against the prevailing moral permissiveness; but to ensure that the teaching of Faith and Morals at all levels within the Church is directed particularly and positively and with great understanding to emphasizing the enrichment that Grace brings to individual lives. It is for want of this clear and positive teaching that young Catholics, in particular, are dropping away from the practice of

their religion. What they are looking for underneath their current restlessness is a supernatural focal-point to their lives, an anchor-hold that gives them meaning. This is precisely what they are not getting. The present and particular tragedy of the Catholic Church in this country at this moment lies there.

Summing Up

It would be quite wrong if you were to regard this letter as an exercise in bishop-bashing. It is nothing of the sort. I have taken advantage of the opportunity the Bishops have so kindly given myself and others in your *Discussion Paper No. 4* to say what we *really* think about the Church in England and Wales today. My first point has been that what the Church in the country lacks at the moment is the understanding exercise of firm authority by the Bishops at all points concerned with the upholding and exposition of true doctrine. My second is that they should do the same with a view to upholding right order in the liturgical and devotional fields, so that a stop may be put to the rootless changes which still continue and concentration be placed instead on consolidation, with a view where necessary to further liturgical development seen not as an uprooting, but as a flowering out of the true traditions of the past. This has always been the way. There is, in fact, no other. And, finally, in the field of morals, let the Bishops speak fearlessly against the prevailing permissiveness but, at the same time, let them see to it that the young, in particular, in their last years at school particularly, are acquainted by skilled and holy and human teachers with the enrichment that Grace alone can bring to their lives. Let them be given that which they most need today—the depth and breadth of life in Christ. Let them know what it means to share life in brotherhood with Christ and to give to others, in all its strength and purity, the love that flows from that sharing. This is what the young really long for. This is what they are not getting. Let them be given it before it is too late.

Forgive, please, the length of this letter. I write what I believe from my heart. I am sure you and the Bishops will receive it in the spirit in which it is sent.

Cave Canem (Beware of Dog)

REV. J. BROWN

IT is difficult to write about the Church in days when she is suffering internal stress; the purpose of this article is to bring into focus some new and prevalent ideas of religion put forward by those ranked under the general title of Modernists, an alien society within the Church, who like blind Sampson of old, seek to pull down the twin pillars of the Church, tradition and authority. There is a serious obligation on every thinking Catholic to make these errors widely known, if only to protect the less well informed. As Dietrich Von Hildebrand so wisely says, "every man is exposed to an infection by the errors and perverted trends that are as it were in the air of the epoch. To become fully alive to these dangers and aberrations, is therefore important for our own sake".

Closely associated with the changes in the Liturgy there appears a decline and decay of the supernatural and the spiritual, a dark cloud between God and His people. This has almost gone un-noticed. To mention a few general indications, Brother Moran (the expert American catechist) remarks that the Credo of Pope Paul, "says nothing to him". Brother is already wandering far from Catholic tradition. A young priest wishing to be relieved of his priesthood confessed that the old truths no longer had any meaning for him. Two seminary professors talking about that greatest of spiritual classics, *The Imitation of Christ* held that it was completely out of date. Most of us remember Pastoral Letters of bygone days when the Bishop was at pains to instruct his flock on the unchanging truths, love of God and our neighbour, prayer, the Real Presence, the Sacrifice of the Mass, penance and devotion to Our Lady. Such Pastorals are rare to-day. I well remember a talk given by Father Paul Crane in Southport. Each time he spoke of some truth of the spiritual life, he was met

with prolonged applause. The poor people are starved of the bread of life. No wonder some are turning to the charismatic movement, or even something more esoteric, they did exactly this at the time of the Reformation.

God has revealed Himself to us and His plan for creation in the Bible and in the Incarnation of His only Son Jesus Christ Our Lord. His Church, the Catholic Church, is the repository, the custodian, and the authoratative interpreter of the truths of revelation. The basic truth of the Bible is the fall of man, original sin, and the promise of a Redeemer. In the days of waiting God was close to his chosen people, prophet after prophet telling them of the coming of the Messias. In the time of God's choice the Angel Gabriel was sent to Our Lady to tell her of her tremendous and fearful part in God's plan. Her answer, "Be it done unto me according to thy word" was the raising of the curtain on the coming of Christ and our reconciliation with our Father. Bethlehem, the hidden years, the three years of Our Lord's revelation of His Divinity and His mission, the choosing of His Apostles with St. Peter as their head, the founding of the infant Church, then the perfection of God's plan on Calvary.

It is clear now how the fact of original sin is of primary importance; it is the nucleus of Christianity. Redemption, Baptism, rebirth in Christ all lose their traditional meaning once the existence of original sin is denied. This denial of the Modernists demands a new explanation, a new orientation of Catholic faith and life. A new theology, which the Clergy and then the Laity are to be brainwashed into believing, a humanist religion, with God possibly in the background. Actually it is decked out with a few of the feathers of the very old story; Pelagianism. Here is the picture in a few rough touches of the brush. Man has come of age; he is now mature. He is the master of his environment, which he can change at will. Change is progress, every change is good; Man is evolving of necessity towards perfection. No room now for absolutes, the philosophy of reality gives way to the mist of relativism and existentialism, which has ever been the philosophy of weakness and despair. Conscience becomes paramount but now the word has a different meaning. It is no longer an informed judg-

ment of what is right and what is wrong; but of what I feel I should do, a purely subjective morality, truth varying according to changing human circumstances. Love is the great thing but the nature of this love is never defined, of course existentialists never define anything. This new idea of love is very similar to what was once called concupiscence, and the ideal of purity becomes obsolete. The title of Our Lady Immaculate is a guardian of the truth of the dogma of original sin; when we call her Mother of God as we do in the "Hail Mary" we acknowledge the divine nature of her Son. Would this be the reason why devotion to Our Lady is so unpopular with the Modernists? The Sacraifice of the Mass is a constant reminder of the fall of man and his Redemption through Christ's death on Calvary, is this why the new breed like to talk of a family meal. Our reception of Our Divine Lord in the Blessed Sacrament is the means by which the redeemed Christian may become more Christ-like, the way of perfection is the way of the imitation of Christ, He is the way, the truth and the life. We must empty ourselves, deny self if we would put on Christ. This is anathema to the modernist and humanist who vaguely believe in the innate perfectability of man. Would this again be the reason why devotion to the Blessed Sacrament is muted, the tabernacle no longer central in the Church, the rubrics of the Mass, which kept the Real Presence of Our Lord always before us, no longer operative, the distribution of Communion now in lay hands, even Communion for the sick where the old and infirm are looking for comfort from their priest, who takes the place of Christ.

In these sad things we are not criticising the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ our first and last love. We humbly wish to uncover an alien presence in the Church, the wolf in sheep's clothing, bent on the destruction of the faithful.

What of the future? It is always foolish to try to don the mantle of a prophet, especially when that future is concerned with the supernatural, God's dealing with His children, the mystery of mercy and grace. We know that Grace is not given to the proud of heart or mind, God resists the proud. We must know and recognise our position face to face with God, our human weakness and the fact that the

best of us are sinners. If the individual who trusts only in himself is suddenly deprived of all the things in which he trusted and he is left open and naked, as were our first parents, then there is room for God and His arms are outstretched in welcome if only the Prodigal will return penitent. "Father I have sinned before heaven and before thee". In other words a conversation is needed, not a Programme for the year 2000. The conversation of a multitude demands a special intervention of the Providence of God, as we see so often in the Old Testament. Maybe Our Lady gave us more than a hint at Fatima; Russian world hegemony followed by world-wide persecution, "The blood of martyrs the seed of the Church". Who knows? The wide future is hidden in the love and mercy of our Father in heaven.

For us who through no virtue of our own remain united with the Church of tradition and with Christ's vicar on earth, we have now an urgent call to strive more honestly after holiness, that so the Mystical Christ may yet radiate goodness and love, a shining torch in a weary world.

"PRIEST, DEAR"

Father John McKee, Author of several books, has recorded this tape cassette, the title translating "*Soggarth Aroon*". It is a rich plum-pudding of a talk, with stories of priests for sultanas and joy in the priesthood for seasoning. He deals with two issues, the first the modern suggestion that the old image of the priest must go—and shows Whose image that is. Then he turns to his late Mother's words; "You priests no longer touch our hearts" and traces the cause of heart failure in the Church. He will touch *your* heart.—Available from King's Land Cassettes, 1 Wood Green, Salhouse, Norwich, England; £1.50 (post free in U.K.).

Pope St. Pius X did not succeed in crushing Modernism. He halted its progress and drove it underground, from where its adherents within the Church worked and waited for the moment when it would emerge once again. Meanwhile, its corrupting influence continued to spread and infected many, as Philip Trower shows in his third article published below.

The Genesis of Modernism

3: THE UNDERGROUND PLAGUE

PHILIP TROWER

BY 1900, Modernist ideas were spreading among the more cultivated clergy and penetrating the seminaries. Everywhere priests started having crises of faith. (Von Hugel's daughter had earlier, in 1897, had a crisis of faith when her father had disclosed to her his spiritual doubts and his hopes for a change in doctrine. Fr. Tyrrel had been called in to resettle her mind.) Books were put on the Index, warnings issued, reviews prohibited. Loisy, Tyrrel, and some others were excommunicated. Loisy, who for years had been protesting his Catholicism, later admitted that he had begun to lose his Faith around 1885.

However, those not excommunicated continued to push their ideas, regardless of censures. In 1907, the Pope issued the decree *Lamentabili* and the encyclical *Pascendi*. These listed, analyzed and condemned Modernist errors. After 1910, priests were required to take a special anti-Modernist oath. Bishops were instructed to make sure that no-one teaching in their seminaries held Modernist views.

St. Pius X was, and still is, bitterly attacked for these measures. But the steps he took were proportionate to the danger. They were made necessary partly by what I'm

afraid we must call the Modernists' deviousness, by their determination to continue posing as Catholics when they no longer were, but chiefly because their beliefs struck at the heart of the Christian religion. Who can blame a Pope for condemning ideas which led a priest into denying that Christ is God, that the Church has authority to teach and rule in His place, and that its doctrines are objectively true? One does not have to be a Scripture scholar to know what St. Peter and St. Paul would have said.

The ordinary faithful who opposed Modernism and fought back were also attacked. Writers sympathetic to Modernism speak of a White Terror; though there was no loss of life. The truth is that in any serious conflict a proportion of people, even with right on their side, are going to act badly, or in the heat of the fight give blows below the belt. But when all cases have been accounted for in which individuals became overexcited and flung accusations at the wrong target, or took advantage of the crisis to work off petty grudges, the reactions of the faithful are thoroughly intelligible.

As soon as they became aware of the new teachings, they recognized them, like the Catholics of the fourth century so highly praised by Newman, as a deadly temptation. A powerful temptation, in anyone aware of what it is, evokes a forceful rejection, and temptations against the Faith have to be dealt with just as firmly as other temptations. When a naked woman was introduced into St. Thomas Aquinas' room in the family castle where he was being held captive, he did not, on grounds of charity, sit down and discuss with her why she was underdressed. He pushed her out of the room and slammed the door. The position of the Modernist was analogous to that of the women. They were trying to stay in the Church without wearing the wedding garment of faith. For Catholics, their doctrinal nakedness was an enticement to infidelity, and that was why they were strenuously repulsed.

Following Devious Routes to the Public Mind

After 1910, Modernism went underground for 50 years. The majority of those involved in the drama outwardly submitted, some, according to their private letters, taking

the anti-Modernist oath with mental reservations. Most Catholics imagined that Modernism had died out. Two world wars and the economic and political troubles of the twenties and thirties helped to turn away attention from the movement and to keep it in control; there were seemingly more serious things to worry about.

But although Modernist ideas were no longer openly expressed or defended, they persisted and continued to exert an influence.

Laberthonniere only died in 1932. Although forbidden to publish, he continued to write, and these later books appeared as soon as he was dead.

Leroy lived on until 1954. As a professor at the College of France, with the prestige of that position, his influence was greater. Being a layman, he was not forbidden to publish. His books were merely censured as they came out. Each time he submitted, but without changing his course; the same ideas would be developed in a succeeding book. Official formulas, he maintained, should receive only official submission and be interpreted to bear an acceptable meaning; he was not dealing with an infallible authority. But his importance for us today lies in his having been a close friend of Teilhard de Chardin. He and Pere Teilhard, he confessed, had discussed their theories together so often that he could no longer tell which were Pere Teilhard's and which his own. As a result, many of Teilhard de Chardins ideas got into print long before the publication of his own works after his death.

Young men who, around 1910 at the height of the crisis, were having their minds formed in the seminaries were still only in their late sixties at the death of Pius XII in 1958. If only a relatively small number lost their Faith, many emerged with battered confidence in the certainty of some of the Church's teachings, a grudging attitude towards the *Magisterium*, or generally fretful feelings.

Memoirs, apologias, histories of Modernism also appear in great numbers between the two wars and exerted an influence on the more intellectually inquiring Catholic clergy and laity, helping to enlarge what one might call the Church of Discontent.

However, most of the Modernist literature produced between 1910 and 1958 appears to have circulated among the higher clergy in typescript or mimeograph, and it seems to have been principally against this that in 1950 Pius XII directed his encyclical *Humani Generis, On False Trends in Modern Teaching*, one of the chief, though not the only figure aimed at, being Pere Teilhard de Chardin.

De Chardin : Hero and Martyr

I don't mean to linger over Teilhard de Chardin. More than enough has been written about him, and I want to avoid giving an unbalanced picture of his place within Modernism. His fame has given many people the impression that he and Modernism are more or less synonymous—that without him Modernism would not have survived—which is certainly not so. Devastating though his ideas have been, they represent only one strand—the evolutionary strand—of Modernism. This strand may be considered the most important one. But Modernism in its totality, as we have seen, is something much more: the attempt at substituting, not just natural selection and the emergence of man from ape, but a whole spectrum of unacceptable theories for the Catholic Faith.

However, in writing an historical sketch of Modernism and its development, I cannot leave him out altogether. I will, therefore, confine myself to what seem to me some salient points about him as a personality, without going into an analysis of his ideas.

Pere Teilhard did not play any part in the first Modernist movement and during his life was unknown to the general public. But from 1922—when an essay on Original Sin, calling it in question, accidentally reached Rome—until his death in 1955, he was a person the highest authorities in the Church were increasingly aware of and worried about. Although forbidden to teach and publish, he wrote prolifically, and what he wrote was read by those who mattered. His active life thus corresponded with the period of Modernism's life underground, during which he was certainly its most significant figure. But he was neither a leader nor an organizer, and at this time was important chiefly, I think, as a symbol. Being prepared, like Loisy

and Tyrrel, to say with less circumspection what others would have to say if they could have done so without damaging their reputations, he became for Modernism a blend of hero and martyr — who happened not to have been killed and in spite of official displeasure lived a comfortable and interesting life — and a focus for Modernist hopes. What was hoped for among other things, what his vindication, if it ever came, would represent, was the death and burial once and for all of Adam and Eve, and with them Original Sin and eternal punishment—"the cruel doctrines", as they were coming to be called.

Now that it is possible to see him in perspective, I think three things strike one (apart from his loss of Faith): how lacking in originality he really was; how spiritually coarse-grained; and—in the grand way that only a deluded *savant* can be—how densely stupid!

This may seem an extreme judgment to make about a man who has been applauded by so many highly educated people, but I think it can be justified.

The Man and His Unbelief

A slight acquaintance with Modernism shows that many of de Chardin's most typical ideas—his pan-psychism for instance (the notion that even in stones and chemicals there is a rudimentary presence of "spirit"), his refusal to allow any distinction between a natural and supernatural order—were already ideological currency when he came on the scene. Most of the rest of his system is just evolutionary progress religion disguised in language and concepts borrowed, after suitable adaptations, from the Catholic doctrine of the Incarnation and the Mystical Body.

If people are unaware of the other qualities I have mentioned it is partly, I imagine, because they have only read his more "presentable" books where his thought is to some extent veiled.

What might be called the "dangerous writings"—those confidential letters and essays which have made their appearance more slowly, often apparently against the wishes of his friends, and which give a different impression of the man and his mind, are less well-known.

Only in these do we discover the extent to which he idolized power and cunning; that he regarded Mussolini's invasion of Abyssinia as the triumph of civilization over savagery; that he had favorable words for Hitler and fascism as long as they were winning ("constructive idealism, however distorted" was on their side); that he thought the German fifth column a force for good (after all, was he not himself a fifth column inside the Church?); that after the defeat of Germany, Communism began to receive his approval, this now representing the wave of the future. From the same sources we learn that he believed in the existence of superior and inferior races and had a generally low opinion of black Africans. (In spite of being fine physical specimens were they fully "hominized", i.e. human? They were probably doomed to die out.) "Progress implies an unquenchable force", he writes, "that insists on the destruction of everything that has outlived its time".

I think it would be difficult to say anything more stupid and coarse-grained than that. One seems to be listening to a particularly ruthless business tycoon planning to shut down an unproductive factory, sack the work force, and exploit a new market.

These aspects of his thought, though appropriate enough in a consistent disciple of Darwin, have of course been soft-pedalled because they are damaging to his reputation as a Christian and a progressive.

Sincere but Wrong-Headed

But if he was neither original nor very intelligent, how are we to account for his success? As big business, he must be in the same class as the pop-star industry.

I think we must admit that, whatever else he lacked, he had literary abilities and imagination. It was these which enabled him to give his ugly banalities the appearance of a mystical vision. Through the haze people are not quite sure what they are being shown—though Catholics should be.

Secondly, he really believed in his system, and in putting over ideas, however wrong-headed, conviction and tenacity, which he had an abundance, are often what count most.

He also seems to have had to an unusual degree that difficult to define power—similar to charm without being it

—of attracting disciples and fascinating his friends. This is not now easy to understand; the personality that has come to light is so unsympathetic, not to say repellent. But it is plainly a fact. It explains I think why writers like Fr. Henri de Lubac, who should know better, spend so much time bolstering his reputation and whitewashing his spots.

But I think his success is chiefly to be accounted for by the fact that his books carried a message which many were longing to hear. They fell on a world of believers whose faith had for several generations been giving way under the hammerblows of “scientific” materialism. (Scientific materialism is no different from straightforward materialism. It is simply materialism propped up with arguments drawn from the natural sciences.) At last Darwin (popularly, though not entirely accurately, seen as the symbol of that scientific materialism), had, so these anxious believers supposed, been in some mysterious way reconciled with Christ. Evolution had been made to sound religious, and religion scientific. They did not see that by Pere Teilhard, Christ had been sacrificed to Darwin.

All of this also no doubt explains the protection he enjoyed and more than once boasted of, from men enjoying high positions in the Church, both within the Jesuit Order and outside. In view of what it knew, and he was saying, “brutal” Rome was surprisingly lenient to him. Evidently his friends and protectors were able to persuade the authorities that even if they had a heretic on their hands, the heretic was a world genius and they must hold on to him at all costs. Only later did anyone realize that the world genius was just Nostradamus all over again, but this time wearing a Roman collar and reading the fossils instead of the stars.

Pere Teilhard’s great influence, of course, only began after his death, when his friends started to publish his manuscripts, and Catholics, ignoring warnings, to read them. But here I will leave him for the moment and return to Modernism in general.

The New Message of Salvation

Progress will start this further tour of inspection even though I wrote at some length about it in a previous article.

Like Pere Teilhard, in a general survey of the formation of Modernism, progress is too important to leave out.

Belief in progress as a force in some way immanent in nature and driving it forward to a state of perfection, an earthly paradise, is, as we know, the new message of salvation, which has been growing in power and influence since it was first preached 250 years ago — with liberty, equality, and fraternity replacing Faith, Hope, and Charity as the three absolutely necessary requirements for beatitude. In one or all of its branches, Marxist, secular humanist, or utopian liberal, it is the Church's major religious rival, whose teachings she was to take into account and which faces her at every turn.

Since 1900, as Christians of all kinds have, with increasing rapidity, fallen away from their religion and joined those who believe in some kind of progress religion, so has the influence of progress religion on the remaining Christians become correspondingly greater. Its power also seems to grow with prosperity.

By the 1950s, more and more of the westernized clergy were plainly feeling its attractions. Just as progress religion is the heart of modern thought, so, when the lid is taken off the cauldron, it will be found that progress religion is the heart of neo-Modernism — and will be preached by enraged ecclesiastics as "liberation theology" and by the sedate and respectable as "human advancement" and "making a world fit for humans to live in".

What the Church means by expressions like these is something quite different. Although we are to engage wholeheartedly in all good works and make the best we can of it, says the Council, "the form of this world, distorted by sin, is passing away" (*Gaudium et Spes*, No. 39).

All the ambiguous references to "hope" and "salvation" which will abound in the catechism to come, will have in mind the earthly, not the heavenly paradise.

Between 1956 and the opening of the Council, the hearts of many bishops and priests as well as laymen were turned even more decisively in this direction by perusing Pere Teilhard's *Phenomenon Of Man*, *Divine Milieu*, and *Hymn Of The Universe*, and using them as their spiritual reading. The two first were the books Pere Teilhard, while he was

alive, tried hardest to get permission to have published, and in which he tailored his ideas to make them as little unacceptable to the ecclesiastical censors as possible. They converted influential clergy in large numbers to his semi-pagan, semi-materialist "Christianity".

Blessed are the Successful

In Pere Teilhard's version of progress religion, the reality and effects of the Fall are denied or ignored. Moral evil been more or less abolished, as has the need for Grace. Sin and evil have been more or less identified with pain and suffering (the consequences of sin) or with whatever else limits and keeps men down: all of which men by their ingenuity must abolish. (Men have now taken over from God in the running of evolution and are responsible for its further development.) The cause of sin and evil is not wickedness in the human heart or rebellion against God; nor is death a punishment for sin. All these things are due to the statistically unavoidable accidents of evolution (which God is unable to prevent) or men's failure to cooperate with it. The Christian worldview preached for 2000 years, beginning with the Apostles, and foreshadowed in the Jewish worldview, is completely wrong. We are not a fallen, but an ascending race. This world is not substantially a "vale of tears", a damaged paradise. The purpose of life is not primarily personal sanctification through the service of God and neighbor amid trials and tribulations in the hope of an eternal reward. We are the work force in a booming contracting business. The task of Christians is to dominate nature and transform the world into a well-organized garden suburb full of healthy, happy (and immortal?) citizens, which Our Lord, when He comes again, will find humanly fit to live in. He will then take over this desirable property. There will not apparently be a Judgment, which would be an affront to human dignity. (The end of the story, however, is ambiguous. When Pere Teilhard talks about Our Lord as the culmination of human history or the summit of the evolutionary process—his Omega Point—one can never be sure whether he believes in a Second Coming or even that our Lord still exists and is God. The name Christ in this context often seems to be simply a symbolic word for the future race of supermen he looks forward to.

The same can be said of very many of his followers.) Throughout, no conflict is recognized between holiness and worldly success; "economic and social emancipation", it is assumed, automatically produce virtue; sanctity and prosperity are seen as advancing hand in hand. "Blessed are the occupants of the Ritz Hotel". We are dealing with a religion for successful professionals.

These naive, and in Christians, astonishing ideas, were given clear expression at the Council by a Philippine Archbishop, and are now preached in whole or in part with embarrassing candor by public figures like Archbishop Hurley of Durban (see the Archbishop's address to a medical congress in Bombay reprinted in the London *Tablet* May 20th, May 27th, and June 3rd, 1978).

Blessed are the Liberated

I come next to Liberty; the *summum bonum* for genuine liberals. I would say that in places where basic needs are satisfied, equality and brotherhood are, as objects of desire, very much second best. Having been now in the air for several centuries, liberty as the supreme ideal now is the air for western civilizations, its indispensable oxygen.

But this liberty is, in important respects, at variance with the Christian concept of liberty, the liberty of the sons of God. All men understandably value their liberty as a most precious possession. But for Christians, the highest goal is not liberty; it is the pursuit of truth and goodness, and liberty is only valuable insofar as it serves that end. As ingredients of happiness, the friendship of God and a right conscience are infinitely above it. If we are abusing our liberty to the danger of our salvation, it is a blessing to have it curtailed. This is why poverty and suffering are called blessed states. In no other sense are they. In Heaven we shall all be rich.

The western cult of liberty, however much it once had in it that was good and reasonable, is now closer to the quasi-neurotic passion for one's way and resentment at restraint of frantic adolescents and spoiled children, regarding all authority as an evil and subordination as an affront. One cannot help thinking that Eric Fromm should have written a companion study to his famous *Fear Or Freedom*, and called it *The Loathing Of Authority*. It is just as much

a western disease, and looks as if it may lead to the loss of the liberties we have.

Over the last 50 years, the non-Christian idea of liberty has been seeping into more and more Catholic hearts, and for many of the Catholic intelligentsia had plainly become the highest good, more precious, more in need of protection and preservation than the Faith itself. It now dominates all their thinking; indeed, is often the sole subject of their thinking. As an idea, it is perhaps this more than anything else which has emptied religious houses, secularized the life of seminaries, and produced doctrinal chaos. Ecclesiastical authorities of nearly every kind are, it seems, so terrified of challenging it, so apparently uncertain what is objectionable about it, that the majority find themselves powerless when it makes its demands. Both progress religion and the cult of liberty are far more important components of neo-Modernism than they were of early Modernism. In that first drama, they only had a walk-on part.

Leaving these general notions, however, which live on the public highways of modern life, we will return in the next instalment to the studies and liberties of the learned and look at the most important new arrival there: existentialism.

(To be continued)

THE FORGOTTEN FACTOR

The series of four articles by Father Paul Crane and published in *Christian Order* under the above title is available in cassette form from the Sole Supplier: C. V. Publications, 48 Cambridge Road, Wigmere, Gillingham, Kent, U.K. Phone Medway 0634-33168. Titles and prices as follows. Quote numbers with orders please:

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Book Review

TRIUMPH AND DISASTER

The Triumph of the Holy See by Derek Holmes; Burns & Oates, Ltd.; pp. 306.

I fail to see how the effect of this excellent book could be anything but wholly therapeutic on those who read it; and this quite irrespective of where their sympathies may lie with regard to present disputes within the Church. Traditionalists will rejoice that by the eve of the First World War the Papacy had finally extracted itself from the clutches of Rulers and States who had tried in one way or another to submit it and its policies to their will for the preceding hundred years. Their joy, however, should be mixed with sorrow that the price paid was the identification in the public mind of the Catholic Church with political reaction, its virtual isolation from the contemporary world, the stifling of its social apostolate and the loss of the workers. The impression left understandably enough in the minds of so many was of a dualism, which Marxists are quick to point to today and which most certainly developed during this time, however justified by the appallingly difficult circumstances in which the Holy See found itself so often throughout this period. The gain was there, for the Papacy did not succumb, but the loss was almost immeasurable. We can see the Second Vatican Council and its aftermath of renewal—however ill-judged and misapplied at times—as an endeavour to redress the balance.

This, I think, is what Progressives have to learn. The problems are far, far deeper than many of them realise. They have been germinating for a very long time. They need study, understanding and action that must flow from the love of Christ. What you have at the moment is something that appears as little more than surface tinkering. The progressive contribution is woefully inadequate because it does not go to the heart of things. Pottering at the periphery of non-essentials is just about all we appear to be getting at the moment. The gap between reality and the progressive flight of fancy that goes by the name of renewal

is no less wide now than it was when the whole business started.

And the trouble with too many Traditionalists is that they are allowing themselves to be drawn into the fight at the periphery where it should not be waged; too many of them are off-centre. The impression created by too many of them is of a dualism persisting in their own minds very similar to that which so often seemed to typify the Church as a whole until more recent times. Meanwhile the main problem, which is that of bringing Christ to the world, is allowed to fall into the background. Too often, it would seem, the present struggle within the Church appears as being fought over the wrong issues, by the wrong people, in the wrong places and at the wrong time. I believe that very few who read this admirable book with the care and objectivity it so obviously deserves will come to any other conclusion. History is a great healer. This book stands in apt illustration of this fact. Its Author has placed us all in his debt.

The debt will be repaid to the extent that we make his objective and unobtrusive scholarship an essential part of the background against which we view the course of events within the Church today. We are by no means over the worst of it. The real task has just begun. As an aid essential to the understanding of that task this book is invaluable.

Paul Crane, S.J.

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